

Calvary Protestant Evangelical Free Church

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CALVARY CHRONICLE

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The article below was taken from Concise Theology by J.I. Packer. I highly recommend this book for brief summary of Christian doctrine and theology. I hope you are encouraged to fear not your own mortality, as I was from this article.

Charles Lucchesi

MORTALITY CHRISTIANS NEED NOT FEAR DEATH

By J.I. Packer

"For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body."

PHILIPPIANS 1:21-24

We do not know how humans would have left this world had there been no Fall; some doubt whether they ever would have done so. But as it is, the separation of body and soul through bodily death, which is both sin's fruit and God's judgment (Genesis 2:17; 3:19, 22; Romans 5:12; 8:10; 1 Corinthians 15:21), is one of life's certainties. This separating of the soul (person) from the body is a sign and emblem of the spiritual separation from God that first brought about physical death (Genesis 2:17; 5:5) and that will be deepened after death for those who leave this world without Christ. Naturally, therefore, death appears as an enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26) and a terror (Hebrews 2:15).

For Christians the terror of physical death is abolished, though the unpleasantness of dying remains. Jesus, their risen Savior, has himself passed through a more traumatic death than any Christian will ever have to face, and he now lives to support his servants as they move out of this world to the place he has prepared for them in the next world (John 14:2-3). Christians should view their own forthcoming death as an appointment in Jesus' calendar, which he will faithfully keep. Paul could say, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.... I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far" (Philippians 1:21, 23), since "away from the body" will mean "at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8).

At death the souls of believers (i.e.: the believers themselves, as ongoing persons) are made perfect in holiness and enter into the worshiping life of heaven (Hebrews 12:22-24). In other words, they are glorified. Some, not believing this, posit a purgatorial discipline after death that is really a further stage of sanctification, progressively purifying the heart and refining the character in preparation for the vision of God. But this belief is neither scriptural nor rational, for if at Christ's coming saints alive on earth will be perfected morally and spiritually in the moment of their bodily transformation (1 Corinthians 15:51-54), it is only natural to suppose that the same is done for each believer in the moment of death, when the mortal body is left behind. Others posit unconsciousness (soul sleep) between death and resurrection, but Scripture speaks of conscious relationship, involvements, and enjoyments (Luke 16:22; 23:43; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Revelation 6:9-11; 14:13).

(continued on next page)

Death is decisive for destiny. After death there is no possibility of salvation for the lost (Luke 16:26) - from then on both the godly and the ungodly reap what they sowed in this life (Galatians 6:7-8).

Death is gain for believers (Philippians 1:21) because after death they are closer to Christ. But disembodiment, as such, is not gain; bodies are for expression and experience, and to be without a body is to be limited, indeed impoverished. This is why Paul wants to be "clothed" with his resurrection body (i.e.: re-embodied) rather than be "unclothed" (i.e.: disembodied, 2 Corinthians 5:1-4). To be resurrected for the life of heaven is the true Christian hope. As life in the "intermediate" or "interim" state between death and resurrection is better than the life in this world that preceded it, so the life of resurrection will be better still. It will, in fact, be best. And this is what God has in store for all his children (2 Corinthians 5:4-5; Philippians 3:20-21). Hallelujah!

Church Updates

Winter is now upon us and the church continues to follow guidelines to keep everyone's safety in mind.

Two worship services take place each Sunday: **9:30 a.m. service is held downstairs**
11:00 a.m. service is held upstairs in the sanctuary

Face masks must be worn during the service, and to physically distance from one another seating is separated.

Children's Church meets on-line Sunday mornings, the Wednesday Night Bible Study meets at the church at 7:00 p.m., and the Thursday Night Ladies Bible Study meets via Zoom the 1st and 3rd Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.

There are a number of options in donating and tithing to the church. When attending a service, there is an offering plate in the back of the room; donations can be mailed directly to the church or even dropped off in the church mailbox; or you can donate on-line through the church website using PayPal.

For those who cannot attend the Sunday service, the worship service is still being recorded and will be posted on the church website (www.cpcbaldwin.com - click on "YouTube") and streamed on YouTube at www.youtube.com (search for Calvary Church, Baldwin, NY).

The Message of Christmas

We can easily see the loving, giving heart of the Father in giving His only begotten Son. John 3:16 states, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

God the Father set the example of giving, and it was carried through the life of Christ while He lived here on earth. Jesus said, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." John 14:9. Our Lord and Savior carried on the example of the Father.

The spirit of giving originated with the Father and radiated through the Son, and in turn Jesus commands us to do the same. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." John 13:34

This kind of love has been manifested in this church, in how we rejoice with one another, cry with one another, and serve one another. I encourage you at this wonderful time of year to keep on giving and loving as God the Father, who sent His Son, and as His Son sends us into the world.

I thank my God every time I think of you. Have a Merry Christmas!

*Love,
Pastor Charlie*

DINNERS FOR OUR SENIORS

The Thanksgiving dinners for our seniors went so well, and the seniors were so appreciative for the meal, that the church has decided to once again offer another dinner in time for Christmas.

To receive a special meal cooked by our resident chef Ralph, please call the church and let us know (516-223-4070). You have the option of picking up the meal or we will arrange to have it delivered to you.

**Deadline is Thursday,
December 17th.**

Ralph will be cooking on Tuesday, the 22nd, then a few volunteers will put the packages together so they are ready to go.

Merry Christmas to you all

VIRTUAL CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

This year the Christmas Eve Service will not be held in person, but will be pre-recorded and available for viewing by Christmas Eve. Just like the Sunday worship services, the recording will be posted on the church website and also streamed on YouTube.

The service will include playing of Christmas carols accompanied by instrumentals, numerous special musical pieces, scripture readings, lighting of the Advent candles, a Christmas message from Pastor Lucchesi, and a virtual candlelight carol sing.

In a collaborative effort, singers from Calvary Church and from the Arcola Church in Dulles, Virginia, will be participating in a joint virtual choir. The vocalists will be performing "Glory Be to God." Even though the churches are hundreds of miles apart, the choirs were able to come together and rehearse. Pictured at right are the two choirs meeting and practicing online through Zoom.

Though we cannot actually meet together to worship on Christmas Eve and celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, we invite you to join us and be part of Calvary' traditional Christmas Eve Service.



M Reaching Haiti for Christ

I Calvary received an e-mail update from Pastor Steve Exantus who is the Executive Director with Reaching Haiti for Christ Ministries. Calvary has partnered with Pastor Steve in his missions efforts in Haiti. The organization helps the people living in Haiti in education, medical care, feeding the hungry, and Evangelism. One of their more recent projects was to help provide fresh water to the people in Haiti.

S My greetings to all of you in Jesus name!

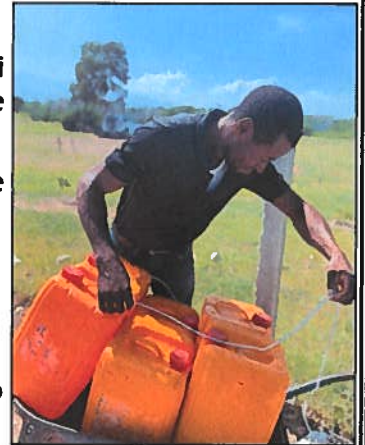
O I'm glad to share with you the pictures of my recent trip in Haiti especially in Turbé. I'm thankful to God and those who financed the water project.

N Finally, the well was done. I flew to Port-Au-Prince to have a Service of Thanksgiving and served water to the community.

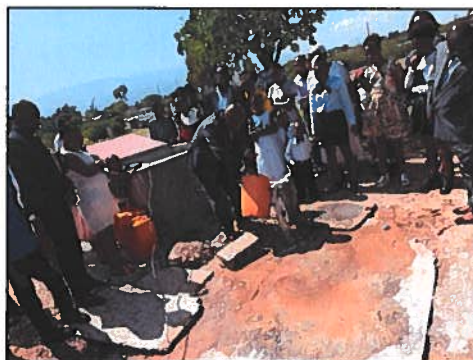
S Let us continue to work for God through communities.

O Sincerely,
Pastor Steve Exantus

R Pray with us for our next big project and give if the Lord leads you to do so: *brick wall around the Turbé church property.*



E To learn more about Pastor Steve and his work in Haiti, you can visit www.reachinghaiti4christ.org.



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Calvary Protestant Church
2801 Park Avenue
Baldwin, NY 11510

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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BIRTHDAYS

DECEMBER

1st Lauren Nicolich
6th Trevor Watts
9th Mary Kaspar
10th Noelle Nehring
11th Daishaun Elliott
15th Anthony Alex Ramos
20th Stephanie Verity
21st Diane Benedetto
24th Wren Waldvogel
25th Sean Deedy
27th David Manuel
31st Dylan Rose

JANUARY

1st Martha Mietenkorte
3rd David Brewster
4th Gregory Dapice
5th Magalie Alcindor
6th Fitz Alcindor (Sr.)
8th Matthew Lucchesi
9th Lorna Bigby
9th Steven Elcock
14th Dorothy Brown
16th Bob Benedetto
18th Raynell Falden
21st Louis Fazzino
21st Eugene Lloyd
22nd Wally Capasso
22nd Erin Waldvogel
24th Magaline Alcindor
24th Vincent Rotolo
24th Tim Waldvogel
25th Finch Waldvogel
27th Dave Senita
29th Roy Knoernschild
29th Allison Linhart
30th Ralph Rose
31st Chris Watts

**Happy
Birthday!**

ANNIVERSARIES

DECEMBER

26th Carmine & Mary Jo Dapice
31st Jim & Terry Tucci

JANUARY

4th Charles & Barbara Lucchesi
21st Joe & Louise Fazzino
24th Matt & Karen Linhart

The Return of the Son

- by Mitch Finley

Had Jesus never been born, the most we could hope for would be a mid-winter holiday celebrating the gradual "return" of the sun. Instead, we celebrate the coming of the Son of God into the world and our redemption for sin. And we look forward to the time Jesus will return, not just to warm us up a little, but to give us the kingdom of Heaven for all time.

The hope of the Advent season is found in the knowledge that God loves the world. Not simply a message of comfort, the gospel prods us to do like wise: to love and to care for the world.